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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 318th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 5 October 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Paul Badji ..... (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

2. **The Chairman** recalled that, on 22 September 2009, the President of the United States of America, Mr. Barack Obama, had hosted a meeting in New York with the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, that had not yielded specific results. In his subsequent statement to the General Assembly, President Obama had emphasized that negotiations on permanent status issues should be relaunched without conditions.

3. That same day, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, under the chairmanship of Norwegian Foreign Minister Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, had met and had welcomed the political programme of the Palestinian Authority aimed at establishing a Palestinian State within two years and had demanded the opening of the crossings into Gaza.

4. On 24 September 2009, the Quartet had met at the level of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs at United Nations Headquarters. In a statement issued after the meeting, the Quartet had called on Israel and the Palestinians to act on their previous agreements and obligations, in particular the road map to Mideast peace, without regard for reciprocity in order to create the conditions necessary for the resumption of negotiations. It had urged the Israeli Government to halt all settlement activity, including natural growth, and to refrain from provocative actions in East Jerusalem and had called on the Palestinian Authority to continue making every effort to improve law and order, fight violent extremism and end incitement.

5. That same day, a high-level meeting had been held at United Nations Headquarters to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). National leaders and senior ministers from around the world had paid tribute to the Agency, while the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Ms. Karen Konig AbuZayd, together with President Abbas and Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan, had appealed for more international assistance.

6. On 29 September 2009, the Bureau of the Committee had met with a delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, headed by its President, Mr. Rudy Salles. The parties had discussed preparations for the International Meeting in Support of a Peaceful Solution of the Question of Jerusalem, which was to be held in Malta, in February 2010.

7. On 29 September 2009, the Human Rights Council had discussed the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and had decided to postpone its consideration of that report until March 2010.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

8. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for Palestine) said that, in order for the peace process to resume, Israel should halt its illegal policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and cease construction of settlements and other colonization measures in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem. The continuing construction of the settlements and the separation wall undermined the integrity and contiguity of the Palestinian Territory and would make the two-State solution an unviable option. The efforts of Israeli extremists to Judaize East Jerusalem had further escalated tensions.

9. The international community should continue to pressure Israel to abide by its legal obligation to halt all such activities, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and in fulfilment of its commitments under the road map to Mideast peace. Referring to the call by the United States for a return to negotiations without any so-called preconditions, she pointed out that cessation of settlement-building activity was not a Palestinian condition but an obligation under international law.

10. Any negotiations should be based on internationally recognized terms of reference: the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map. In that connection, it should be understood that the outcome sought by the Palestinian side was: complete withdrawal by Israel from all of the Palestinian Territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem; establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its

capital; and a just solution to the question of the Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Final status negotiations should address all core issues: borders, Palestine refugees, the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, water, security and prisoners. Anything less than that was unacceptable.

11. With regard to internal Palestinian affairs, she said that, regrettably, the Palestinian factions had not yet been able to reconcile their differences. President Abbas would therefore have no choice but to fulfil his constitutional duty and set 25 October 2009 as the date for the holding of Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

12. The situation in the Gaza Strip remained grave as Israel continued its immoral and inhumane blockade of the territory thereby impeding reconstruction efforts. Her delegation rejected the notion that all pending issues should be resolved in order for reconstruction to proceed, and called for the opening of all crossings in order to allow unimpeded movement of persons and goods, and construction materials. There was broad support for the Secretary-General's proposal that reconstruction of Gaza should begin with the revival of UNRWA and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects valued at approximately $94 million. Restarting those projects would serve as a precedent for the commencement of work on others valued at nearly $1 billion. Israel should not be allowed to continue its collective punishment of the nearly 1.5 million Palestinian civilians in Gaza, who were living in misery and despair because of the Israeli military aggression.

13. Her delegation welcomed the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, which had been prepared by eminent legal personalities of unassailable integrity. The report confirmed that the Israeli occupation forces had committed serious violations of human rights and grave breaches of humanitarian law and possible war crimes and even crimes against humanity. Israel should never again be allowed to commit such crimes against the Palestinian people, and the report would serve as a valuable deterrent in that regard. Impunity for war crimes only promoted further criminal behaviour, prolonged conflict and obstructed peace.

Consideration of the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2009/CRP.2)

14. **Mr. Borg** (Malta), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2009/CRP.2), said that in accordance with established practice, the Secretariat would continue to update it, as necessary, in consultation with the Rapporteur, in order to reflect any new developments which might take place before it was forwarded to the General Assembly.

15. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft report.

16. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

17. **The Chairman** reminded delegations that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would take place on 30 November 2009 and invited all members of the Committee and observers to be represented at the commemorative meeting to be held on that occasion, as customary, at the ambassadorial level.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.